

WALTER LIPPMANN

Interviewed by Howard K. Smith

STATINTL

Smith: Is it possible that a free, loose-jointed, easy-going society like the American democracy can compete with a tightly-concentrated, tightly-controlled, secret dictatorship like that of the Soviet Union and Red China?

Lippmann: That's the question, and that is why many of us think that the Kennedy Administration has to get moving rapidly, or we won't be able to do it. I wouldn't like, for a moment, to underestimate how formidable this competition is. It's very formidable, and when you see people running around this country, wanting to abolish the income tax and turn the federal government back into a Confederation of States, you despair of the possibility of persuading them to do what we're going to have to do, and what we're going to have to do is going to take a lot of money, and it's going to take a very strong government.

Smith: Is there a good case in favor of foreign aid that isn't being made?

Lippmann: I would say that the United States can no more refuse to contribute to foreign aid, in the world, than the richest man in town can refuse to contribute to the community chest. Now, the nature of the method of aiding is very debatable. And I hope and believe that there is a movement on foot to reform some of its worst abuses. It is true, as some of the liberal critics in the Congress have been saying, that a lot of this money, as in Laos, which is a peculiarly bad case of how the thing failed - a lot of this money simply enriched the upper class who exploited, who flaunted their riches all over, and increased the hatred of the poor for the rich. And that made them very fertile ground for Communist propaganda. In other places, we've undoubtedly spent too much money on armies that have no military value whatsoever from the point of view of our interests, but are kept there, are paid for by us, in order to keep them loyal to the king or ruler of the country. Those are great abuses. On the other hand, if the world isn't going to go into that landslide into Communism which Khrushchev predicts, there have to be anchor points in all the continents, which show that prosperity and a certain amount of social justice can be achieved by another way than the Communist way. And that means that you must focus your energy, your aid on key countries. Now, if you ask me what they are - the key country in Asia is India. If India can be made to work

as a successful, democratic state, the influence of that will spread all over Southeast Asia, no matter who takes over Laos in the next few months. The key country in Latin America is not Cuba. It's Brazil. I would hesitate to say just which is the key country in Africa, but I imagine it might be Nigeria. And I think in those cases, we ought to focus our aid, not necessarily stopping this other aid, which is really a form of bribery to keep them quiet, but focus it and do enough to do it. There's no use building half a bridge across a river - you've got to build a whole bridge. . . . [Kennedy] talked to the American people as if they were suffering from some terrible burden in foreign aid. He should have told them, considering how grim the outlook is, that that was the first installment, and a very small one, on what they're going to have to pay, and that they mustn't think that they can just cut it down and have everything just the way they like it in the world.

Smith: What do we do now [about Berlin]?

Lippmann: We have taken the line, conventionally, that any change in the situation of Berlin would be for the worse. . . . That's Dr. Adenauer's view. Change nothing - fight - threaten to fight if anything is changed. Don't negotiate. It can't be negotiated. You'll only weaken it. Now, the other view, which is the one I share, is that the situation in Berlin is not good. Berlin is in a state of chronic crisis, which means that on the Soviet side, any time that Khrushchev wants to put on a little pressure, he could just turn the screw a little bit in Berlin, and the whole world is focused on Berlin, while something's going on in Iran or Cuba or heaven knows where. . . . We should say that the freedom of Berlin, in the sense of their ability to govern themselves, to live their own life, to keep their physical and economic and spiritual and political contacts with the Western world, cannot be touched. We won't negotiate about that, but the legal basis and the statutory rights that go with that, are negotiable. They were never negotiated. I would like to see [us take] the position of saying to Khrushchev, we don't like Berlin the way it is. We want to improve it, and if you can negotiate with us an improvement, we'll be very interested.

Smith: I'd like to talk to you now about the latest Russian diplomatic creation, and that is what Mr. Mikoyan called the "Troika" System of control. If that is applied